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SUBJECT: ATT LAYS OUT PLANS IN NEW YEAR ADDRESS

¶1. (U) On December 31, Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) delivered his annual New Year's Address to the nation. The centerpiece of ATT's address was the discussion of plans, first summarized on the occasion of his inaugural anniversary speech on June 8, 2009, for a constitutional revision and a restructuring of the Malian government to make it more responsive to the needs of the Malian people.

¶2. (U) Noting that he had established the Daba Diawara commission to study institutional reform in February 2008, ATT said he would now move forward with the process to amend Mali's 1992 constitution. Specifically, ATT endorsed those parts of the Diawara Commission's report calling for the creation of a Senate as a second legislative chamber, a reorganization of the judicial system, the creation of a separate court responsible for government audits, and an extension of the role and power of the Mediator of the Republic.

¶3. (U) ATT also called for the restructuring of Malian local government. Noting that the current system of regions, districts, and communes often left citizens far removed from their elected representatives, ATT called for redrawing administrative maps to literally bring local and regional government closer to the people. Similarly, ATT stated that the statute framing government in the District of Bamako needed to be revised. Finally, ATT reiterated the importance of decentralization in Malian democracy, although in his speech, he did not enumerate current or planned proposals for furthering the process.

¶4. (SBU) ATT thanked the Aga Khan Foundation, the Islamic Development Bank, and the governments of Saudi Arabia, China, and Cuba for their contributions to economic and social development in Mali. No mention was made of U.S. or European assistance programs to Mali.

BARLERIN